

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

---

Property Address:	<b>1531 T Street, NW,</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>U Street HD</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>May 23, 2013</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>13-161</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Kim Elliott</b>		New Construction

---

The applicant Kemaurelle Pierre- Preddie on behalf of the owner J. C. Garrison seeks design review for a new roof deck on the upper roof at 1531 T Street.

### Property Description

The property sits in the middle of the north side of T Street in a very consistent row of three-story row houses with projecting bays built in the late 1800s.

### Proposal

The owner proposes to build a wood roof deck (17'-6" x 14' footprint) with a 36" tall wood railing on the rear portion of the roof. The roof deck would be set back approximately 45' from the front elevation. Access would be from a wood stair connected to a lower roof deck which was built on the lower rear ell earlier this year.

### Evaluation

The deep house and the location of the roof deck assure that the roof deck will not be visible from the street. The concern of this project is that this addition interrupts a pristine roofline on this row of houses. While many houses on this row have roof decks on the lower rear ell, this would be the first on the upper roof. While there are several examples of similar upper rooftop deck additions nearby and within the historic district (including: 1511 Swann Street, 1523 Swann Street and 1532 U Street), there are no such roof decks on this row.

The HPRB has made distinctions on what constitutes a compatible treatment that have varied somewhat by the specific character of an historic district or as applied to different building types. For instance, the Board has approved the design of infill buildings with a much higher percentage of glass on commercial streets, which have buildings characterized by large storefront windows, than on residential blocks, which are characterized by greater solidity and consistent scale of fenestration.

However, the Board has not typically made fine-grained distinctions for non-visible alterations based on variations between similar blocks. For instance, the Board has not limited property owners in a block where no house has a rear addition from constructing one, as long as it is appropriately sized and scaled. By extension, while third floor roof decks are not found on this particular block in the historic district, the Board and HPO have approved many similar decks on other blocks within the U Street Historic District after ensuring that they will not be visible from a public street; the HPO recommends that this same standard be applied.

### Recommendation

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act.*



1531 T Street with lower level deck



view of rear of 1500 block of T

Precedents nearby (photos provided by the applicant):



1511 Swann Street



1523 Swann Street\*  
\*projects predated HD



1532 U Street\*